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IMPORTANT HISTORICAL LETTERS.

CAPTAIN S. H. M. BYERS, now a citizen of Iowa, made a national reputation many years ago by a single song—"Marching through Georgia." He was an officer in General Sherman's army in its famous March to the Sea, of which he will give a graphic narrative in an early number of the *NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW*. Captain Byers was then, and still remains, a trusted friend of the great soldier, who has given him, recently, a remarkable proof of his confidence by permitting him to copy from his private records and correspondence a series of unpublished letters from historical Americans, illustrative of important epochs of the Civil War. These letters will appear in the *NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW*.

In a series of these letters, referring to "Reconstruction Days," Captain Byers has produced a correspondence between General Sherman and General Grant, relating to what is sometimes characterized as "President Johnson's Plot," to transfer the Government of the United States, at the close of the war, from the hands of the men who had saved it into the hands of the men who had fought against it in the South, or refused to fight for it in the North. As this subject, when brought into new prominence by Mr. Chauncey M. Depew, was discussed in the *NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW* by Hon. George S. Boutwell, this important correspondence was sent to him with a request to write an introduction to it.

As United States Senator and Secretary of the Treasury, Mr. Boutwell enjoyed the entire confidence of General Grant and General Sherman, and, as one of the members who impeached President Johnson, he was familiar with all the secret evidence which justified that grave procedure.

I.

INTRODUCTION BY SENATOR BOUTWELL.

The letters which constitute the body of this article, furnished to *THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW* by a friend of General Sher-

man, possess a general interest which justifies their publication. But there are to be found in the text statements and allusions whose value may not be appreciated by persons not acquainted with the history of the times.

It is worthy of notice that, both in the letters of General Sherman and in the letters of General Grant, there are evidences of mutual and intimate friendship which was not disturbed by the events of the war nor by the embarrassments to which both were subjected during the Administration of President Johnson.

The letters of General Sherman of the 18th of March, 1870, and the 18th of March, 1871, contain statements derived from his knowledge of affairs in the States of the South which have been justified, unfortunately, by the history of that section of the country from that day to the present. In his opening sentence of the second letter he says :

“It is notorious that no Southern man can be punished for murder and violence to a Union family, for the juries acquit them even if they are indicted.”

It is evident, also, from these letters that he had no faith in the continuing capacity of the negroes to establish and maintain popular governments in the Southern States, and that the prejudices of the past would resume control. The spirit of General Sherman and the energy of his purposes are shown in his letter of 1871, in which he says :

“Unless Congress can and will give the President power to declare and execute martial law in any State or district where life and property are in peril our Government is simply ridiculous.”

Again he says in the same letter :

“The rebels whom we defeated in war will beat us by politics.”

The prediction, made by General Sherman in 1871, has been confirmed by the experience of the country.

The letters of General Sherman and General Grant indicate, also, that there were times when they lost confidence in the disposition of the leaders, even of the Republican Party, to maintain efficient and pure Governments in the South ; and General Sherman makes the declaration, in his letter of 1871, that the Republican Party made use of General Grant's personal popularity to their advantage, and he prophesied that they would betray him and cast him off the moment it seemed to their advantage. His devotion

to the army and to the country is shown in the concluding paragraph of the letter to General Auger of 1871, where he says :

“ Our duty is to keep the army, as far as we can, well ordered, well disciplined and as well content as possible. On its submission to discipline, its love of order and respect for authority this nation may yet have to depend, for things now tend, as in 1861, toward anarchy.”

Happily his apprehension as to a state of anarchy has not been verified.

The first letter of General Grant is dated the 13th day of January, 1867, and it is addressed to General Sherman. The opening sentence of that letter refers to the Mexican mission of General Sherman. Those who are acquainted with the history of the times will recall the fact that General Sherman was sent to Mexico in the autumn of 1866, in company with our Minister to Mexico, Mr. Campbell, who had been recently appointed.

In the month of May, 1865, President Johnson issued a proclamation for the re-organization of the State of North Carolina. That proclamation was followed by others of the same character for the re-organization of each of the several States that had been engaged in the rebellion. By virtue of these proclamations, conventions were assembled, constitutions were formed for the several States, and legislative assemblies chosen. Under the constitutions so instituted the people were called upon to elect representatives to Congress, and the legislatures of the several States elected their respective quota of senators. In the early autumn of 1867, and previous to the meeting of the fortieth Congress, President Johnson, in two public speeches and in several private conversations, had given utterance to the opinion that the senators and representatives so elected in the States that had been in rebellion were legal members of that Congress and entitled to seats therein. The admission of those members, acting, as they would have acted, in conjunction with the Democratic senators and representatives from the loyal States, would have constituted a majority in each branch of Congress. While there is no positive evidence upon the point, there are many circumstances which justify the conclusion that President Johnson contemplated the organization of Congress upon that basis. Had that attempt been made, and successfully made, the Republican members of Congress from the loyal States would have been under the necessity either of accepting the organization and acting in it as a minority party, or they would

have been compelled to abstain from all association with it and accept the position, as far as the policy of the Administration could control affairs, of rebels against a constitutionally organized Government.

It is now an established historical fact that President Johnson made an effort to send General Grant to Mexico upon a mission, for which, probably, there was no sufficient reason in the relations of this Government to that of Mexico.

In an article published in the *NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW* for December, 1885, I gave the substance, and in some parts the language, of a conversation with General Grant in regard to the effort made by President Johnson to induce him to accept that mission. While the subject was under consideration by the President and Secretary of State, the President issued an order, without the knowledge of General Grant, requiring General Sherman to leave his command at Fort Leavenworth and report at Washington. That command was obeyed, but, before the arrival of General Sherman, the President had received the peremptory refusal of General Grant to enter upon the mission. In the letter of June 13, 1867, General Grant refers to the subject in these words :

“The termination of your mission to Mexico caused, I think, no disappointment, as the whole scheme failed when I refused to go.”

This declaration by General Grant is conclusive to the point, that the statement which I made in the *NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW* of December last, to which I have referred, was justified by the facts.

In further support of the theory, that President Johnson contemplated the transfer of the Government into the hands of the Democratic party, with the coöperation of the Senators and Representatives who had been elected in the South under the proclamations which he had issued, is the remark of General Grant in the letter of the 13th of January, 1867 :

“There was unquestionably a great desire to commit you to the support of the present Administration against Congress, right or wrong, as there has been me.”

Again, in a letter of the 18th of September, 1867, General Grant refers to the attempt to send him to Mexico, and says :

“Unless great changes take place between this and the 1st of February, I shall not be able to leave Washington this winter. If I can get off, however,

for a couple of months, I shall take about the trip I refused to take last winter, and of which you had the opportunity of enjoying on that account. If I go, I shall not take Campbell with me."

The anxiety to which General Grant was subjected, in his administration of the office of General of the Army during Johnson's administration, is indicated in this letter to General Sherman. He says :

"I am afraid to say on paper all I fear and apprehend: but I assure you that, were you present, there is no one who I would more fully unburden myself to, than yourself, or whose advice I would value more highly."

Both General Grant and General Sherman were opposed to the methods of administration in the War Department under Secretary Stanton. In these letters there are indications, on the part of both these officers, that Stanton assumed the control of affairs to such an extent, that the administration in the hands of the General of the Army was merely nominal. General Grant refers to this condition of things when he uses these words :

"I am in hopes of getting the command of the army back again where it belongs, and, if I do, there should always, for some years at least, be some one present to exercise it, lest it revert again to the Secretary of War."

One of the most important letters in this connection is that of General Sherman to President Johnson under date of the 31st of January, 1868. The date of the letter is worthy of notice, inasmuch as it corresponds in time to the controversy which arose between President Johnson and four or five members of his Cabinet, on the one side, and General Grant on the other, upon the question of fact whether General Grant made a promise to President Johnson to resign the office of Secretary of War, *ad interim*, during the suspension of Secretary Stanton. From this letter it appears that Johnson had invited General Sherman to come to Washington ; but it does not appear in what capacity he expected him to act while there. After some introductory remarks as appears, which are not quoted, General Sherman says :

"To bring me to Washington would put three heads to an army—yourself, General Grant, and myself, and we would be more than human if we were not to differ. In my judgment it would ruin the army and would be fatal to one or two of us."

This statement is important in connection with what is known of the relations between President Johnson and General Grant, in the fact that it points directly to the removal of General Grant and

the substitution of General Sherman to the command of the army. General Sherman resisted this proposition and entered into an argument to show that it would be unwise for him to accept the position proffered. He proceeds to denounce the influence of Washington life, and declares that it had been fatal to Generals Scott and Taylor, and he attributes the defeats of the army of the Potomac to the circumstance that its head-quarters were near to Washington. Further, he says :

“It would have overwhelmed General Grant at Spottsylvania and Petersburg if he had not been fortified by a strong reputation already hardened, and because no one then living coveted the place.”

President Johnson could not have completed the reading of this letter without arriving at the conclusion that no advantage to his schemes would be gained by the substitution of General Sherman for General Grant. In the first place, Sherman bestows upon Grant the highest compliments, and then proceeds to say that he had never seen him so much troubled as he had been in Washington where he had “been compelled to read himself a sneak and deceiver, based on reports of four of the Cabinet and apparently with your knowledge.”

This language refers to the controversy which was then going on between the President and General Grant upon the allegation by the President that General Grant had promised to resign the office of Secretary of War, *ad interim*, previous to the passage of any resolution by the Senate disproving the suspension of Secretary Stanton. General Grant denied emphatically that any such promise had ever been made. The known opinions of General Grant, the circumstances to which reference has already been made, especially as to the purpose of the President to organize Congress upon the basis of the State Governments that had been set up under his proclamation, justify the conclusion that no such promise could ever have been made by General Grant.

General Grant and General Sherman, in coöperation with Reverdy Johnson, made an effort to induce the President to nominate Governor Cox, of Ohio, to the office of Secretary of War in place of Mr. Stanton. President Johnson, in the interviews that were had with him, indicated distinctly that the appointment would not be made. General Grant must have entertained the opinion that if a vacancy should be created the place would be

filled by a person who would second the views of the President in regard to the questions of reconstruction and to the rights of members elected under his proclamations to seats in the Senate and House of Representatives.

President Johnson, in a letter to General Grant, dated the 31st day of January, 1868, made a statement of his recollection of the interviews that took place between himself and General Grant in reference to the office of Secretary of War. General Grant replied to that letter the 3d day of February, in which he controverted the President on the important question involved. Thereupon the President, on the 5th day of February, 1868, made an appeal in writing to the five members of his Cabinet who were present at the interview between himself and General Grant. Four of these members, Gideon Welles, Hugh McCulloch, Alexander W. Randall, and O. H. Browning, endorsed substantially the statement of the President. Mr. Seward was more diplomatic, but while he reviewed in a long letter the interviews at which he had been present, and made some statements of what took place, and made explanations, sometimes in favor of the President and sometimes in favor of General Grant upon points incidental to the general question, yet he made no definite statement either in support of the President or in support of General Grant. It is to these letters that reference is made by General Sherman in the paragraph quoted.

The letter of General Sherman of the 22d of January, 1868, is a minute statement of the facts which, within his knowledge, touched the controversy between the President and General Grant. It will be observed that as far as his information extended it supports the position taken by General Grant. But the view which confirms the statement of General Grant that he made no promise to the President is supported by the fact that such a promise was wholly inconsistent with the opinions which General Grant was known to entertain concerning the purposes of the President in regard to the reconstruction of the Government. If anything is established by the history of the times, it is the fact that General Grant, during all that period, entertained the opinion that it was the purpose of the President to use the power which he possessed, both directly and through the several departments, to prevent the reconstruction of the Government upon the Congressional basis. Entertaining such opinions, it is beyond the realm of probabilities

that General Grant could at any time have made a promise which would have placed in the hands of the President an additional means of accomplishing his own purposes and defeating the will of Congress and of the people of the country in regard to the reconstruction of the Government.

GEORGE S. BOUTWELL.

II.

GENERAL SHERMAN TO GENERAL ORD.

HEADQ^R'S ARMY OF THE U. S.,
WASHINGTON, D. C., *March 18, 1870.*

GEN'L E. O. C. ORD, *Comd'g Dept. of California, San Francisco.*

DEAR ORD: . . . The truth is, politics have again gradually but surely drawn the whole country into a situation of as much danger as before the civil war. The army left the South subdued, broken, and humbled. The party then in power, forgetful of the fact, that sooner or later, the people of the South must vote, labored hard to create votes out of negroes and indifferent material, and when at last these States became reconstructed, as was to be expected, the prejudices of the past resumed control, and now the negro government, aided by a weak force of Republican whites, have been swept aside, and the Union people there are hustled, branded, and even killed. Such is the nature of our Government that the nation is powerless to apply a remedy. All crimes must be tried by juries on the spot, who, of course, protect their comrades, and condemn their opponents. So that any Southern citizen may kill or abuse a negro or Union man, with as much safety as one of our frontiersmen may kill an Indian.

The memories of the war are fading fast, and even our own men are dividing out, not upon old issues, but the new probabilities of the strength of parties. General Grant's personal popularity seems to be waning, and the opposition to his administration is such that if they can unite they will surely prevail. . . .

Always your friend,

W. T. SHERMAN.

And again, in the following from General Sherman to General Augur, a year afterward, the same evils in the South are pointed out. To many, certain statements in this letter will seem like prophecy itself.

III.

GENERAL SHERMAN TO GENERAL AUGUR.

HEADQ^R'S ARMY OF THE U. S.,
WASHINGTON, D. C., *March 18, 1871.*

GEN'L C. C. AUGUR, *Command'g Dept. Omaha, Nebraska.*

DEAR AUGUR: . . . It is notorious that no Southern man can be punished for murder and violence to a Union family, for the juries acquit them

even if they are indicted. As in South Carolina and Meridian, the troops arrive after the event, illustrating the old maxim of locking the stable-door after the horse is stolen. Unless Congress can, and will, give the President power to declare and execute martial law in any State or district when life and property are in peril, our Government is simply ridiculous. In the present state of parties, and the small force of the army, made so by the Republicans themselves, we are simply powerless, and the rebels whom we defeated in war *will beat us by politics*.

Since the Secretary of War took to appointing sutlers, and even to naming post commanders, I feel little interest in public matters. I was in hopes that General Grant would cure some of these defects of administration, but he has so many advisers, and is so pulled and hauled about, that I really pity him. The Republican Party made use of him and his personal popularity for their advantage. And they will betray him, and cast him off the moment it seems to their advantage. Fortunately, however, they have no one to whom they can turn as a party leader. When the Democrats come to organize they will experience the same difficulty.

Our duty is to keep the army, as far as we can, well ordered, well disciplined, and as well content as possible—on its submission to discipline, its love of order, and respect for authority, this nation yet may have to depend, for things now point, as in 1861, toward anarchy. . . .

Truly your friend,

W. T. SHERMAN.

IV.

GENERAL GRANT TO GENERAL SHERMAN.

HEAD-QUARTERS ARMIES OF THE U. S.,
January 13, 1867.

DEAR GENERAL : Whilst you were absent on your Mexican mission I did not write to you, because I did not know how to address you, except through the Secretary of State, and I have nothing to do with that functionary when it can be avoided. Since your return, although I have been in the office almost daily, I have been so unwell that I do nothing but what I am compelled to do. For the last day or two I have felt much better, and am in hopes that I will have no relapse.

The termination of your mission to Mexico caused, I think, no disappointment, as the whole scheme failed when I refused to go. It may be that when Juarez can be reached, you will be called on again to accompany our minister to his capitol, merely to save appearances, but I doubt even this being asked of you.

My dispatch to you to come to Washington was written by direction of the President. If you do not desire to come to Washington this winter, you need not do so unless you receive further orders, which I will not give without being directed again to give them. You can, however, interpret the orders you have as authorizing a pilgrimage to this Capitol at any time you feel disposed to

make it. There was unquestionably a great desire to commit you to a support of the present Administration, against Congress, right or wrong, as there has been me. In this particular there is but little difference between parties. No matter how close I keep my tongue, each tries to interpret from the little let drop that I am with them. I wish our political troubles were settled on any basis. I want to turn over the command of the army to you for a year or so, and go abroad myself. But to leave now would look like throwing up a command in the face of the enemy.

My family are all very well, and join me in wishing to be kindly remembered to Mrs. Sherman and the children. I did not repeat my visit to Mrs. S. when I was in St. L., because I understood I would not be likely to see her.

If you come to Washington either alone or with some members of your family, we would be glad to entertain you during your stay.

Yours truly,

U. S. GRANT.

To LT.-GEN. W. T. SHERMAN, St. Louis, Mo.

V.

GENERAL GRANT TO GENERAL SHERMAN.

HEAD-QUARTERS ARMIES OF THE U. S.,

WASHINGTON, D. C., *Sept. 18, 1867.*

[*Private.*] MY DEAR GENERAL: I received your very kind letter written from Omaha, which gave assurances of your sympathy for me at the very unpleasant position which I am now called on to occupy. It is truly an unenviable one, and I wish I had never been in it. All the romance of feeling that men in high places are above personal considerations and act only from motives of pure patriotism, and for the general good of the public, has been destroyed. An inside view proves, too truly, very much the reverse. I am afraid to say on paper all I fear and apprehend, but I assure you, that, were you present, there is no one who I would more fully unburden myself to than yourself, or whose advice I would value more highly.

I received a letter from Mrs. Sherman yesterday from New York which indicates that she will not be in Washington this visit. I answered her letter this morning sending the letter to St. Louis.

Unless great changes take place between this and the 1st of February, I shall not be able to leave Washington this winter. If I can get off, however, for a couple of months, I shall take about the trip *I refused to take last winter*, and which you had the opportunity of enjoying on that account. If I go, I shall not take Campbell with me. I will want you to come to Washington in that case to take my place. I am in hopes of getting the command of the army back again where it belongs, and if I do, there should always, for some years at least, be some one present to exercise it lest it revert again to the Sec'y of War.

I hope your commission will prove successful; but my faith is not strong. In the first place, Browning would not appoint a man on it who is not already

impregnated with his own views, and turn everything to confirm them. I do not know any man whose contact with had made me think less of in proportion to his capacity. That is exceedingly limited.

Yours truly,

U. S. GRANT.

To LT.-GEN. W. T. SHERMAN.

VI.

GENERAL SHERMAN TO PRESIDENT JOHNSON.

LIBRARY ROOM, WAR DEPARTMENT,
WASHINGTON, D. C., *January 31, 1868.*

To THE PRESIDENT: . . . To bring me to Washington would put three heads to an army—yourself, General Grant, and myself, and we would be more than human if we were not to differ. In my judgment it would ruin the army, and would be fatal to one or two of us.

Generals Scott and Taylor proved themselves soldiers and patriots in the field, but Washington was fatal to both. This city, and the influences that centered here, defeated every army that had its head-quarters here from 1861 to 1865, and would have overwhelmed General Grant at Spottsylvania and Petersburg had he not been fortified by a strong reputation already hardened, and because no one then living coveted the place. Whereas in the West, we made progress from the start, because there was *no political Capitol near enough* to poison our minds and kindle into life that craving itching for fame which has *killed more good men than bullets*. I have been with General Grant in the midst of death and slaughter, when the howls of people reached him after Shiloh, when messengers were speeding to and from his army to Washington, bearing slanders, to induce his removal before he took Vicksburg; in Chattanooga, when the soldiers were stealing the corn of the starving mules to satisfy their own hunger; at Nashville, when he was ordered to the “forlorn hope” to command the Army of the Potomac, so often defeated; and yet I never saw him more troubled than since he has been in Washington, and compelled to read himself a “sneak and deceiver,” based on reports of four of the Cabinet, and apparently with your knowledge. If this political atmosphere can disturb the equanimity of one so guarded, and so prudent as he is, what will be the result with me, so careless, so outspoken as I am? Therefore, with my consent, Washington, never! . . .

With great respect, yours truly,

W. T. SHERMAN.

VII.

GENERAL SHERMAN TO GENERAL GRANT.

LIBRARY ROOM, WAR DEPARTMENT,
WASHINGTON, D. C., *January 27, 1868.*

GENERAL U. S. GRANT, Washington.

DEAR GENERAL: At your request I will endeavor to recall the events within my observation at and about the time you vacated the office of Secretary of War, *ad interim*, and when Mr. Stanton re-entered.

During the week preceding this event I saw you almost daily, as the Board,

of which I am a member, occupied the room in the building next the office of the Secretary of War.

On Saturday, the 11th of January, you told me that, within the past few days, you had read carefully the act of Congress known as the Tenure of Civil Office Bill; that it was different from what you had supposed; that it was so worded, that in case the resolution reported by Mr. Howard should pass the Senate, Mr. Stanton would be restored, and that if you held on, or did any act as Secretary of War, you would incur a liability of ten thousand dollars and imprisonment for five years, a risk you did not feel inclined to run. We then knew the resolution was being debated in the Senate, and was likely to pass at any time.

I think I asked you if you had not promised to give notice to the President, and also what course you intended to pursue. You said you supposed after the resolution had passed the Senate, Mr. Stanton would pursue towards you the same order of proceedings as he had required of you on taking the office at the time of his suspension, viz.: that he would write you a letter demanding the office, and would give you one or two days to act. But you said you would also go to the President right away and tell him how you felt. At 3 p. m. our Board adjourned, and by appointment with General Pope, I took him (General Pope) to the Executive Mansion to pay his personal and official respects to the President. Mr. Johnson received General Pope very courteously, and, after a few minutes conversation, in which both appeared well pleased, General Pope withdrew, and the President detained me to show me some papers, and at that moment you entered. After a minute I also withdrew, leaving you and the President alone together. This was about 4 p. m. of Saturday, the 11th instant, and I supposed, of course, you had gone to the President at that unusual hour, expressly to tell him your conclusion about the office you then held as Secretary of War *ad interim*.

I knew that both the President and the army would be embarrassed by the restoration to the office of Secretary of War of Mr. Stanton, after the strong feelings generated by past events, and saw no solution, except for the President to submit to the Senate the name of some good successor, likely to be confirmed by the Senate. The name of Governor Cox, of Ohio, rose to my mind as being the very man for the place, a gentleman in the highest sense of the term, of fine address and education, of a perfect war record, who had filled every commission from that of colonel to corps commander, who had lost favor with the Republican Party by reason of his opposition to universal negro suffrage, and whose term of office in Ohio was to expire on the following Monday. I had not seen Governor Cox since the close of the war, and did not know that he would accept if named, but proposed to use my influence to that end. That evening I dined by invitation with Mr. Reverdy Johnson, to whom I mentioned my thoughts. He said it was the very thing, that he would himself call on the President the next morning, Sunday, and, as he had to go to Annapolis that evening, he would drop me a note telling me the result of his interview with the President. On Sunday, I saw several gentlemen and some Senators, to whom I mentioned the circumstance, and all approved; I then called on you at your house, about 3 p. m. of Sunday, the 17th, and you not

only approved, but urged me to push the matter all I could, saying that Governor Cox was perfectly acceptable to you, and to the army generally. When I got to my room, I was disappointed to find no note from Reverdy Johnson.

On Monday morning, the 13th early, I again came to this room, where our Board sits, and you soon came in and asked me what was the result of the matter. I answered that Mr. Reverdy Johnson had not written me as I expected, and that I inferred that his application to the President had met with no success. You then urged me to go at once to the President, and use your name, as not only consenting, but urging, that course. I did go to the President about 11 A.M., and after waiting some time was admitted. I asked the President if Mr. Reverdy Johnson had been there the day before, and if he had named Governor Cox in connection with the office of Secretary of War. The President answered "Yes," and that he had a good opinion of Governor Cox, but made no intimation of a purpose to send his name to the Senate. Satisfied the President had given the matter his thoughts, I did not deem it proper for me further to urge the matter, only stating that I thought General Cox in every way qualified, and that I knew from you personally that his appointment would be most acceptable. At that time it was almost certain that the Senate would pass Mr. Howard's resolution, and I supposed the President was fully prepared for it. I believed that you had in the interview of the previous Saturday given the President your frank statement of your intentions in this connection. I left the President and came straight to you, and told you the result, and that, though the President had not said to me what he would do, he left me to infer he would not send the name of General Cox to the Senate.

Tuesday came, and with it Mr. Stanton. He came into the room where Generals Sheridan, Augur, and I were sitting, and was very friendly in his greeting. He said he wanted to see me when at leisure ; and about 10½ A.M. I went into his office through the side door, and found you and him together. I stayed but a moment, and said to Mr. Stanton that I was close by and would come in whenever he called me. I then left you two together. I afterwards was called in by Mr. Stanton, who spoke to me very kindly, but not a word about his tenure of office.

I saw you again that afternoon in your office of General-in-Chief, and you told me that you did not like at all the manner in which Mr. Stanton had resumed the office ; that he had sent for you in a rather discourteous mode ; that, at the time you had relieved him, he had required you to make your demand in writing, and had taken two or more days to clear out the office before letting you in, and that you thought he would have acted towards you as he had required you to act towards him ; that by his course he had compromised you, and you did not like it at all. I think I suggested that we should go together to the President and have a clear understanding about the matter, to which you promptly assented, but, as it was then late in the day, you said you would come to your office at 9½ A.M., and we could go to the President the first thing next morning. That was agreed to, and we met at your office as appointed. You remarked that since you had read a remark in the "Intelli-

gencer" of that morning, you did not feel inclined to go as far as you had intended, as facts were stated therein that could hardly have reached the editor excepting from one or more of the Cabinet. I was then shown by General Badeau the article which, before, I had not seen. I gave it but a casual glance, when you and I went to the President's house together. He received us promptly and kindly. We were all seated. Nobody in the room but the President, yourself, and myself. You first began by telling of certain matters in Georgia and Alabama, which seemed to be the continuation of a former conversation, after which you said substantially : "Mr. President : Whoever gave the facts for the article of the 'Intelligencer' of this morning has made some serious mistakes, etc." The President promptly interrupted ; "General Grant, let me interrupt you just there, I have not seen the 'Intelligencer' of this morning, and have no knowledge of the contents of any article therein." General Grant resumed : "Well, the idea is given there that I have not kept faith with you. Now, Mr. President, I remember when you spoke to me on this subject last summer. I did say that, like the case of the Baltimore police commissioners, I did suppose Mr. Stanton could not regain his office except by a process through the courts." To this the President assented, saying he remembered the reference to the case of the Baltimore commissioners, and you, General Grant, resumed. You said that if you changed your opinion you would give the President notice, and put things where they were before your appointment as Secretary of War, *ad interim*. Here a general conversation ensued in which General Grant said he had taken the office simply because it seemed better that he should be there than anybody who would likely be nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate. And the President referred to his past conduct to show how desirous he had always been to manifest friendship and confidence in General Grant, stating that at a former period he had used his power as Commander-in-Chief to secure to General Grant the exercise of certain functions of his office, which, from practice, had been exercised by secretaries of war, etc. After which General Grant resumed and related to the President how Mr. Stanton had got the key of the room usually occupied by the Secretary of War, and gone into possession of the office, sending to him a blunt message to come to him in the "old style," at which he said he was not at all pleased ; and he then stated strongly that there had been no understanding with Mr. Stanton on his part, and that he had acted as Secretary of War, *ad interim*, in the interest of the army and not of Mr. Stanton ; that Mr. Stanton being in the office did not make him Secretary of War any more than if he were to make his office in his own library room at his own private house. At all which the President expressed himself gratified and pleased.

I took no part in that conversation, but as we rose and walked towards the door, General Grant said : "Mr. President, you should make some order that we of the army are not bound to obey the orders of Mr. Stanton, as Secretary of War," which the President said he would do. After you had finished I merely said in general terms that I did not profess to know the law of the case, but on the score of honor I did not see how any one could hold a Cabinet office without the full confidence of the President.

This is all I can recall as having occurred about that time, and I confess I have been surprised to see the statements of late in the newspapers as emanating from the Cabinet. Surely I thought that your explanation of Wednesday, after that Cabinet Council, was satisfactory to the President on every point touching your action in this matter, only he thought if you had been more positive on Saturday he might have put some one in the office who would have resisted the entry of Mr. Stanton into that particular room ; but I thought that your explanation, that Mr. Stanton being in that particular room did not make him lawful Secretary of War, was conclusive. The real question is, does the Secretary of the Treasury honor his warrants as Secretary of War because he signs his name in that office, or because of the legal effects of the Resolution of the Senate declaring the reasons for his removal insufficient under the terms of Civil Office Bill.

I do think the army should be spared these conflicts in cases purely legal.

Truly your friend,

W. T. SHERMAN, Lieut. Gen.